

Top Secret 318

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Friday 26 May 1978

CG NIDC 78/123C

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NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION
Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to Criminal Sanctions

State Dept. review completed

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Friday, 26 May 1978.

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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Europe

NAMIBIA: SWAPO's Shipanga Released

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[redacted] //Andreas Shipanga, the former Minister of Information of the South-West Africa People's Organization, and 11 other disaffected SWAPO members were released from detention in Tanzania yesterday. The Tanzanians also released seven members of other southern African liberation groups.//

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[redacted] //All but one of the SWAPO members were flown directly to Europe. The British Government has agreed to grant Shipanga political asylum; most other SWAPO members are destined for Sweden, Denmark, Norway, or the US.//

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[redacted] //The Tanzanian decision to release the detainees was made partly in response to pressure from international human rights organizations. In addition, the Western five-power contact group's proposals on Namibia call for the release of all Namibian political prisoners held outside the territory. SWAPO leaders in Namibia have already cited the release in urging South Africa to free SWAPO members held in its prisons.//

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[redacted] //SWAPO leader Sam Nujoma had earlier opposed Shipanga's release, possibly because he feared that Shipanga could mount a serious challenge to his leadership. Some black Namibian political leaders may ask Shipanga to return to Namibia to help lead a moderate political coalition, but Shipanga may well fear that, if he returns, he will be arrested by South African authorities or assassinated by Nujoma's supporters. [redacted]

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ZAIRE: Situation Report

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[redacted] France announced yesterday that it had ordered the withdrawal of its military task force from Zaire, but it did not give the date the force will actually leave. [redacted]

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[redacted] A French Defense Ministry spokesman announced yesterday that the 700-man French Foreign Legion unit would leave Kolwezi by road yesterday for Lubumbashi, some 200 miles away. According to the spokesman, the French force would rest in Lubumbashi before it flies home to France.

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[] Until the arrival of an international peacekeeping force, defense of Shaba Region and of the Europeans still there would be primarily in the hands of the Zairian Army. Belgium still has one battalion of paratroopers in Zaire, but it has been ordered to limit operations to rescuing and evacuating endangered Europeans.

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[] By indicating the French Foreign Legionnaires would rest in Lubumbashi after a three-day trip, the Defense Ministry has established a plausible justification for prolonging military involvement for at least several more days. This will help reassure remaining Europeans and buy time for France to negotiate the creation of an African peacekeeping force.

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Dissident Activity

[] Czechoslovak dissident sources have reported three instances of police beatings of Charter 77 signatories since the middle of this month. Two of the victims were abandoned in the countryside outside Prague. This is the first use of such frequent police brutality against dissidents since the Charter 77 movement was initiated in January 1977.

[] The Chartists interpret the police action as a move by the regime to provoke them into taking retaliatory measures that would make them vulnerable to legal prosecution and as a way of intimidating them during Soviet President Brezhnev's coming visit to Prague. As the US Embassy suggests, the incidents also are probably part of an overall tightening of internal controls in anticipation of increased dissident activity pegged to the 10th anniversary of the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in August.

[] Some Chartists believe their only defense against such police tactics is Western publicity, and they have consequently given detailed accounts to Western newsmen. They have also sent protests to top Czechoslovak leaders. While the beatings have made the Chartists very cautious about their personal movements, they were not dissuaded from issuing a statement of solidarity with convicted Soviet dissident Yuriy Orlov. []

UNITED KINGDOM: Election Chances

[] //The chances for an autumn election in the UK increased yesterday when the Liberal Party announced that it plans to end its pact with the minority Labor government at the close of the current Parliamentary session. All signs point to a close election between the Labor and the Conservative Parties. The Liberals are expected to do poorly. The other small parties could replace the Liberals if another minority government is formed.//

- 25X1 [] //The Liberals will continue to support the government on confidence issues until the session ends--probably some time this summer, although it may be extended until early autumn. Many Liberal Party members wanted to opt out of the pact earlier, but at a special assembly last winter, party leader David Steel convinced party members that the pact should continue at his discretion.//
- 25X1 [] //Since then, largely because of the Liberals' poor showing in several by-elections, pressure has been building to end the pact. Steel indicated yesterday that the main rationale for the pact--economic improvement--had been attained, thus ending the need to support the government beyond this session.//
- 25X1 [] //In addition to the Liberals' poor by-election performance, opinion polls indicate their support has reached a new low. There are indications that the Liberals could lose at least half their 13 seats. Party leaders believe they need time to rebuild their base of support before the election--without associating the party with the Labor government.//
- 25X1 [] //The Labor and the Conservative Parties have been in a virtual dead heat in opinion polls over the past few months. The Tories had held a slight lead over Labor since February, but Labor came out on top by a small margin in a poll held this week. These fluctuations are likely to continue up to the election.//
- 25X1 [] //The two parties have split the last four by-elections, although Labor's victories were by considerably smaller majorities than in the two general elections held in 1974. The Conservatives were highly encouraged because the net swing of votes in those elections went in their favor. If the percentage of swing votes in the by-elections were to be repeated in a national election, the Tories would win a small Parliamentary majority.//
- 25X1 [] //The Laborites, however, are also pleased with their performance in the by-elections. Despite reduced majorities, they held a heavily immigrant district in England and handily captured a Scottish seat, which was earlier considered a toss-up between the Scottish Nationalist Party and Labor. Labor is now favored to win a by-election next week in another Scottish constituency that had been considered a stronghold of

[redacted]

the Scottish Nationalist Party. Labor Party continuance in government requires that it hold a majority of Scotland's 71 seats, something it has done since the 1950s.//

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[redacted] //Despite the importance of other issues, the campaign will center primarily on economic issues, and recent economic news has been favorable to the Labor Party. The country had a positive balance of payments in April, inflation has fallen to a remarkable 7.9 percent, industrial production is up slightly, and unemployment has shown a modest drop. The public has reacted favorably to the government's April budget in which a tax cut was the main feature.//

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[redacted] //The Tories still hope to make an issue of the economy. They led a successful drive--supported by the Liberals and other minor parties--to cut income taxes further than the government proposed. The Conservatives will attempt to exploit any downturn in the economic indicators, and Prime Minister Callaghan will try to schedule the election before this can happen.//

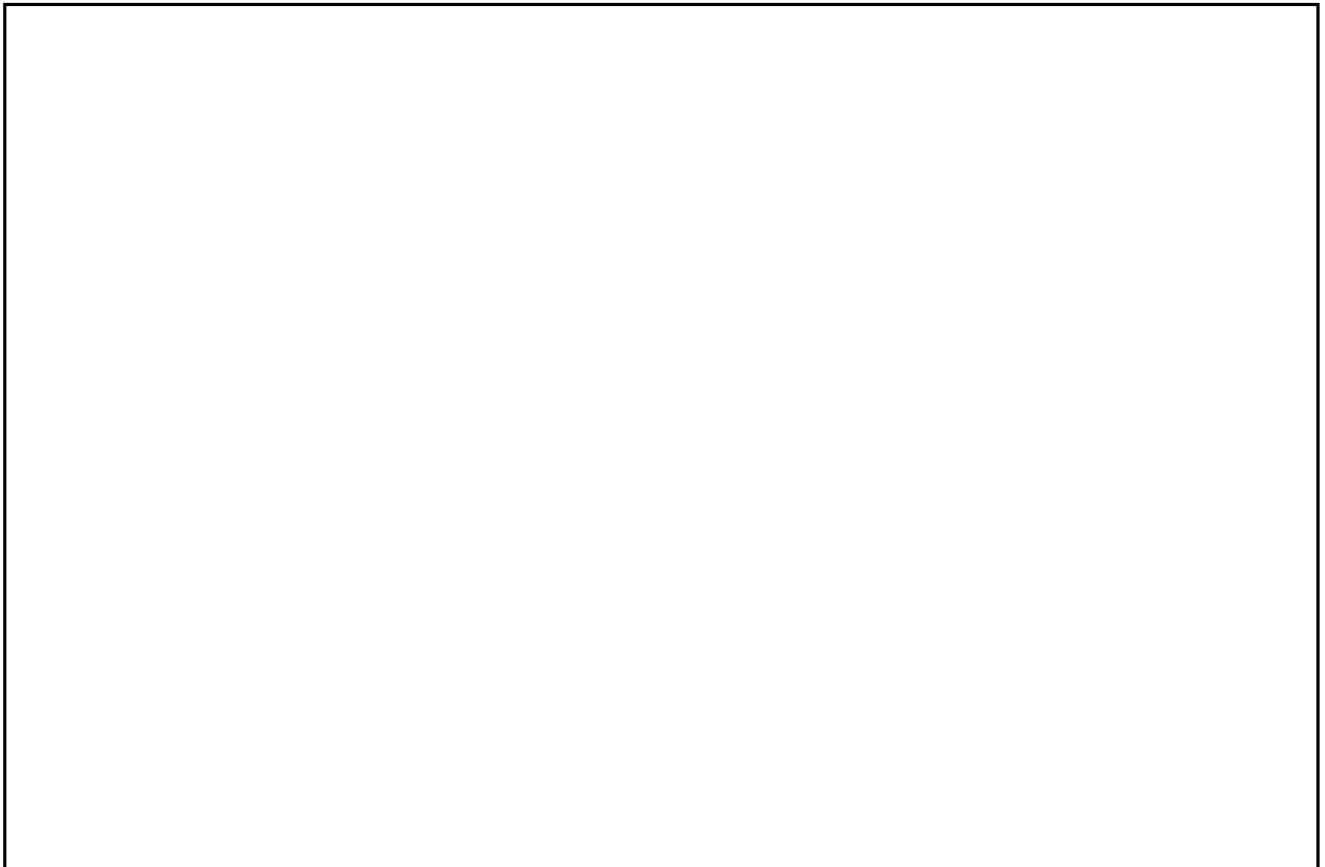
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[redacted] //There seems to be little basis for renegotiating the Liberal-Labor pact after the election, and a similar Conservative-Liberal agreement appears to be even more remote. If present electoral trends continue and the polls are borne out, the Liberals are likely to be relegated to the periphery of British politics for the foreseeable future. The Scottish Nationalists or the Ulster Unionists could replace them as the balance of power in the House of Commons for a minority government.

[redacted]

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BRIEF

Europe

[REDACTED] The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has announced that it will file a complaint with the International Labor Organization in Geneva against the USSR and Poland alleging that both countries have violated the ILO's convention on workers' freedom of association. The convention was adopted in 1948 and has been ratified by both states.

[REDACTED] The other, smaller Western labor grouping, the World Confederation of Labor, lodged a similar complaint earlier this month against the Soviets for their crackdown on dissidents seeking to organize a trade union outside government control. ICFTU General Secretary Kersten has said he still expects the ILO to take action on a formal complaint the ICFTU made a year ago against Czechoslovakia for alleged discriminatory employment practices. [REDACTED]

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